

Emerging technologies show promise for adult learners

Excerpted from *Emerging Technologies in Adult Literacy and Language Education*, authored by Mark Warschauer, Professor of Education and Informatics at the University of California, Irvine and Meei-Ling Liaw, Professor and Chair of the English Department at the National Taichung University in Taiwan for the National Institute for Literacy, June 2010.

Although information and communication technologies have become an integral part of life in the United States, they have not yet been adequately integrated into adult language and literacy programs. This raises concerns because of the potential value of technology for enhancing learning and because of the vital role of technological proficiency as a gatekeeper for occupational success and full civic participation. Research findings on the impact of technology in education are mixed, but a few studies among adult learners suggest benefits worth exploring.

Emerging Technologies in Adult Literacy and Language Education describes the potential contribution of emerging technologies and the challenges involved in incorporating these technologies into adult education programs. Various emerging technologies (those arising or undergoing fundamental transformation in the last decade) are described, ranging from audio and video production to games, wikis and blogs, mobile devices, cell phones, and open-source software. Relevant research is reviewed, and the costs, difficulties, and advantages of deploying various technological approaches in adult education are discussed.

Technologies in five areas appear especially promising for meeting adult learners' needs:

1. Multimodal communication: combinations of linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial modes of meaning
2. Collaborative writing: blogs, wikis, etc.
3. Language analysis and structure: text scaffolding, speech recognition, automated writing evaluation, concordancing, etc.
4. Online networking: virtual environments, social networking sites, multiplayer online games, etc.
5. One-to-one and mobile computing: emerging hardware (such as netbooks, smartbooks, nettops, rich clients, cell phones, etc.), open-source software, and cloud computing.

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Emerging tools

Pods: www.eslpod.com hosts more than 500 free downloadable audio files organized by topic and developed especially for English language learners.

Blogs: Two excellent examples of blogs for facilitating the exchange of information among adult educators are:

- The Adult Literacy Education blog by David J. Rosen (<http://davidjrosen.wordpress.com/>) and
- The Adult Education and Technology blog by Marian Thacher (<http://marianthacher.blogspot.com/>).

Both contain thoughts and reflections about adult education and technology, links to blogs set up by other adult educators, and additional online resources for adult education.

See [September/October Nevada Connections](#) for additional relevant blogs.

Social sites: Several social networking sites have been set up specifically to connect language learners and mentors in English and other languages, including Livemocha, Lang-8, Mixi, and Praxis Language. These sites usually combine

access to self-study material and opportunities to practice and communicate with others through peer-to-peer or peer-to-mentor synchronous or asynchronous interaction.



Technology Standards ready for implementation



"There aren't any icons to click. It's a chalk board."

To address the rapid changes in technology, instruction, and learning environments, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) led a collaborative, international effort to create Technology Standards for students, teachers, and administrators.

Widely adopted and recognized in the United States and increasingly adopted in countries worldwide, the Standards integrate educational technology standards across all educational curricula. They are not subject-matter specific, but rather a compendium of skills required for students to be competitive and successful in a global and digital world. They address learning and teaching across entire educational systems and at all student levels and are used for technology planning and curriculum development across primary and secondary school settings.

The students' Standards address the skills and knowledge students need to learn effectively and live productively in a digital world. They identify several higher order thinking skills and cite digital citizenship as critical competencies for living productively in our emerging global society.

The foundational skill areas include the ability to:

- Demonstrate creativity and innovation
- Communicate and collaborate
- Conduct research and use information
- Think critically, solve problems, and make decisions
- Use technology effectively and productively

The teachers' Standards cover the skills and knowledge educators need to change the way they teach, the way they work, and the way they learn in an increasingly connected global and digital society. They define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

The administrators' Standards define the skills and knowledge school administrators and leaders need to lead and sustain a culture that supports digital-age learning, builds a vision for technology infusion, and transforms the instructional landscape. They acknowledge two critical understandings:

- For administrators to create and sustain a culture that supports digital-age learning, they must become comfortable collaborating as co-learners with colleagues and students around the world.
- In today's digital learning culture, it's less about staying ahead and more about moving forward as members of dynamic learning communities. Administrators must convey a vision for technology infusion and ensure development of their own technology skills and those of others.

Visit www.iste.org/standards.aspx to view or download the Standards.



Emerging technologies *(Continued from page 1)*

The report examines the potential for using emerging technologies in each of those five areas in adult literacy and adult ESL programs in the United States and then briefly considers their application in professional development for adult educators.

These emerging technologies are all rapidly evolving. Many have been little investigated or, in some cases, not examined at all in adult education settings. The authors conclude, "None (of these technologies) are so demonstrably successful in adult language and literacy programs that educators should feel compelled to adopt them immediately. Yet while overexuberant adoption would be a mistake, so too would be failing to recognize the long-term potential of these technologies for adult language and literacy instruction. ... It is possible to imagine a day in the not-too-distant future when some kind of mobile computing device, no more expensive than a couple of textbooks, will be as commonplace in the classroom as pen and paper are today."

NAE News — free Webinars for members



Twitter provides immediate access to resources throughout the world! Every day, educators from all over the world use Twitter to connect with their colleagues. They support each other and share ideas, tips and lesson plans. Several adult educators report their students are actively using social media tools, engaging with each other to discuss issues and solve problems.

From one educator: "I've been exposed to more amazing resources in a month on Twitter than 2.5 years of University." Another said she received more ideas for her classroom from a 2-hour Twitter chat session with colleagues than she gleaned from her last conference.

In November, the [Nevada Adult Educators organization](http://www.nvadulthood.org) hosted "Using Social Media to Improve Student Learning," a free Webinar for members. Presenter Jane Bozarth, Ed.D., nationally renowned author of the recently released book *Social Media for Trainers: Techniques for Enhancing and Extending Learning*, discussed techniques and strategies for incorporating social media into the teaching of adults.

One of the many resources she provided was a link to [23 Things](http://www.23things.com) that you can do on the web to explore and expand your knowledge of the Internet and Web 2.0. These small exercises provide guided practice through a host of social media tools such as blogs, Flickr, RSS feeds, wikis, etc.

This session was offered at no cost to current members, as was the two-part Webinar on persistence the organization offered earlier in 2010, as a service to the membership.

Next up: In early 2011, NAE will offer a Webinar to introduce teachers to Twitter and its many capabilities. Invitations will be sent to current members ... don't miss out! To renew or join the only organization devoted to adult education in Nevada, visit www.nvadulthood.org.



[@nvadulthood](http://www.twitter.com/nvadulthood)



www.facebook.com/nvadulthood

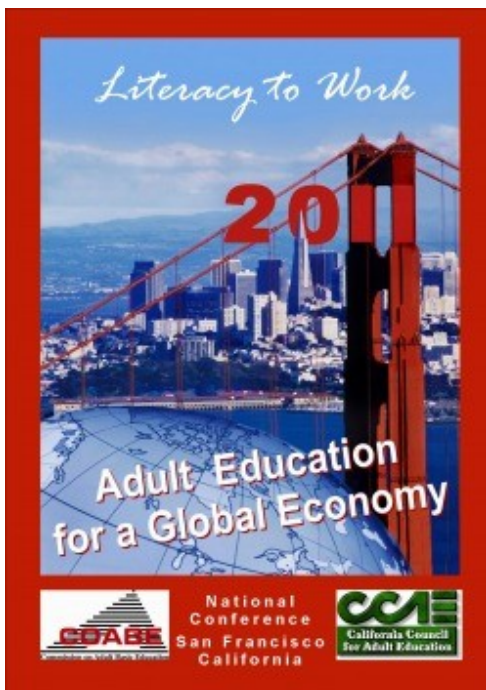
21 Signs you're a 21st century teacher

Written by Lisa, [SimpleK12 Blog](http://SimpleK12Blog.com), October 27, 2010

1. You require your students to use a variety of sources for their research projects ... and they cite blogs, podcasts, and interviews they've conducted via Skype.
2. Your students work on collaborative projects ... with students in Australia.
3. You give weekly class updates to parents ... via your blog.
4. Your students participate in class ... by tweeting their questions and comments.
5. You ask your students to study and create reports on a controversial topic ... and you grade their video submissions.
6. You prepare substitutes with detailed directions ... via Podcasts.
7. You ask your students to do a character/historical person study ... and they create mock social media profiles of their character.
8. Your students create a study guide ... working together on a group wiki.
9. You share lesson plans with your teacher friends ... from around the globe.
10. Your classroom budget is tight ... but it doesn't matter because there are so many free resources on the Web.
11. You realize the importance of professional development ... and you read blogs, join online communities, and tweet for self-development.
12. You take your students on a field trip to the Great Wall of China ... and never leave your classroom.
13. Your students share stories of their summer vacation ... through an online photo repository.
14. You visit the Louvre with your students ... and don't spend a dime.
15. You teach your students not to be bullies ... or cyberbullies.
16. You make your students turn in their cell phones before class starts ... because you plan on using them in class.
17. You require your students to summarize a recent chapter ... and submit it to you via a text message.
18. You showcase your students' original work ... to the world.
19. You have your morning coffee ... while checking your RSS feed.
20. You are reading this.
21. You tweet this page, blog about it, "like" it, or email it to someone else!

This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

MPAEA offers scholarships for 2011 conference



As a membership benefit, the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association will provide the conference registration fee for 24 MPAEA members to attend the joint COABE/MPAEA/CCAEE to be held April 17 – 20, 2011 in San Francisco. The MPAEA 2011 Conference Scholarship will pay for conference registration fees only, are not to exceed \$325, and may not be used for preconference fees, tours or side trips. The applicant must be working in an MPAEA member state and must be a current member of MPAEA.

MPAEA continues to offer two additional scholarship opportunities, based on available funding:

- Memorial Scholarship for Graduate Studies: Up to \$1000 annually to a graduate student enrolled in a graduate degree program in adult education or closely related field or in a college or university located in one of the eight Mountain Plains member states. To be eligible, a member must be appropriately enrolled in a graduate program and a member of MPAEA for the past calendar year.
- Teacher Innovation Scholarship: Up to \$250 annually for creative ways to reach students. The intent of this flexible scholarship is to supplement direct instruction to students. Applicant must be working in an MPAEA member state and be a member of MPAEA (may submit a membership application along with the scholarship application).

For conference details, visit www.ccaecoabe2011.com.

Deadline for all scholarship applications is February 1, 2011.

Visit www.mpaee.org and click on “scholarships” for links to the applications.